To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lyle Atwood and when World War I began I was 18 years old. I lived am from a small town in Georgia, but when the war started in 1914, I felt I hade to join the United States army. World War I began in 1914 and did not end until 1918, during this time millions of soldiers and civilians were killed.

World War I was fought between the Allies (Great Britain, France and The United States) Vs. The Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire). The war started when an Austro-Hungarian Prince name Franz Ferdinand was murdered.

At first the United States tried to stay out of the war, after all, the problems of Europe did not affect most Americans. Many Americans believed in isolationism, the idea that Americans should stay out of world conflicts. Unfortunately, this was impossible.

There were two main reasons the United States joined the war. On May 7th, 1915, a British cruise ship called the Lusitania was attacked and sunk by a German submarine. Several American citizens died during the attack. The second event that forced America to join the war is known as the Zimmerman telegram. A German diplomat named Zimmerman sent a secret message to the Mexican government asking Mexico to attack the United States. Zimmerman was trying to organize a sneak attack against America. These two events angered Americans and made us forget about isolationism. When I found this out I was angry. I waned to protect my country so I joined the army.

Woodrow Wilson was the president at the time. Even though many Americans still wished to avoid war President Wilson took action, he declared war on Germany. As a result of the presidents action The United States entered World War I.

World War I affected the world in many important ways. In 1918, the Central powers were defeated. Germany was forced to sign the treaty of Versailles. This treaty punished Germany by taking away its territory, limiting its military, and forcing Germany to pay for the damage done in the war. Several years later a German named Adolf Hitler would use the treaty Versailles as an excuse to start World War II. Hitler claimed that Germany had been violated by the treaty and needed revenge.

A second major affect was that United Stats could no longer be isolated from the rest of the world. World War I turned the United Stats into an active participant in world affairs, a role that the United States plays even in 2011.

World War I was a horrible event. I lost my legs in the fighting and still have nightmares to this day. However, even though it was a terrible moment in history, World War I has had a tremendous impact on America and the world.